

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fire has shaped ecosystems throughout time; people and ecosystems have evolved with the presence of fire. For many years fire was aggressively excluded to protect both public and private investments and to prevent what was considered the destruction of forest, savannahs, shrublands and grasslands. Fire exclusion, both wildland and prescribed, sometimes favors non-native species in some fire-dependent areas.

Orange County Fire Authority personnel have prepared this Wildland Fire Management Plan with the intent to satisfy State mandates and provide a fire plan for State Responsibility Areas (SRA) within Orange County. The plan is dynamic in nature and has a field driven planning process.

The goal of the Wildland Fire Management Plan is to reduce total government costs and citizen losses from wildland fire in Orange County. To accomplish this the OCFA must develop a process to address such factors as firefighter and public safety, wildland urban interface issues, prescribed fire, suppression, preparedness, protection priorities and cooperation. Throughout the process the plan must continually consider and incorporate the cooperative interdependent relationships of wildland fire protection providers, provide for public stakeholder involvement, and create a fiscal framework for policy analysis.

The Wildland Fire Management Plan defines and assesses four (4) components. They are (1) Weather, (2) Assets at Risk from wildland fire, (3) Fuels and (4) Level of Service. These assessments will aid in developing and monitoring long term changes of the wildland fire protection currently being provided.

Finally, a Wildland Fire Strategy will be developed to foster partnerships and gain concurrence on plan implementation. The strategy, among other things, will (1) include alternatives to reduce total costs and increase fire protection effectiveness, (2) allow wildland fire service providers to focus on meaningful solutions for identified problem areas, (3) identify cost-effective pre-fire management investments to reduce taxpayer and citizen losses from wildland fire.